

Mediterranean Diet and the Reduction of Cholesterol

(Vail Valley Medical Center)

The PATH Curriculum, a corporate wellness program, was offered to staff members at the Vail Valley Medical Center. This weight management program is modeled after the Mediterranean diet, and instructs participants on four basic principles: consumption of all natural foods, behavioral controls to establish healthy eating habits, reduction in stress-induced eating, and increased daily activity.

Our preliminary data originates from forty-six hospital professionals who participated in The PATH Curriculum over an eight-week period. A subset of course participants volunteered to provide pre and post measurements of weight, cholesterol and self-reported behavioral changes. Two weeks after completing the program, these participants achieved statistically significant changes in weight and cholesterol, known risk factors for weight-related health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

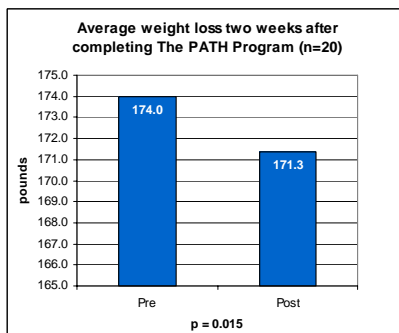


Figure 1: Participants experienced a statistically significant overall average weight loss of about 3 pounds two weeks after completion of the program. 75% of subjects reported weight reduction at the two-week time point. Of those who lost weight, the average loss was 4.2 pounds.

Weight loss is attributed to the synergistic effects of the principle program elements, whose combined effect resulted in reduced portion sizes and decreased snacking through the day (see Figure 3 below).

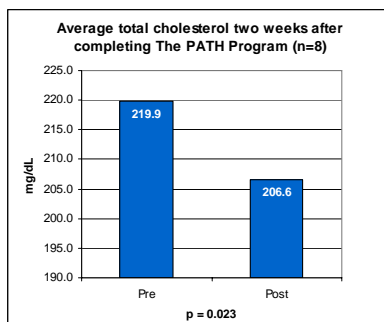


Figure 2: Participation in The PATH Curriculum resulted in a statistically significant drop in total cholesterol. The average change of 13.3 mg/dL represents a solid decrease in this important marker for heart disease risk.

More importantly perhaps is the fact that this change occurred in a comparatively short period of time, only two weeks after completion of The PATH program. We believe this cholesterol drop results from the overall decrease in consumption reported by subjects.

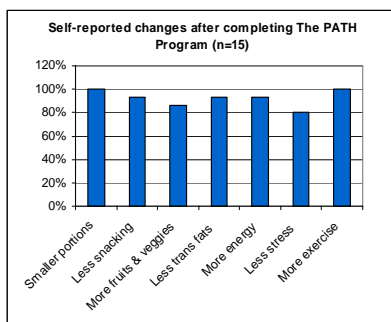


Figure 3: Participants completed a questionnaire designed to evaluate behavioral modifications induced by The PATH Curriculum. Over 80% of all responders reported positive changes in measures such as portion sizes, snacking, and fruit and vegetable intake.

The prevention of weight re-gain has become the primary goal of most weight management programs, and behavioral changes such as those reported by The PATH participants form the basis for long-term weight control.